

THE EXPOSITOR

ND • HOMILETIC • REVIEW



JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL CHURCH METHODS



Linn Memorial Methodist Church, Clarence, Missouri, on the campus of Central College, the center of religious life of the students. In the Sanctuary of this beautiful edifice, the student body meets each Tuesday morning for chapel. The photograph is available through the courtesy of Rev. Milton M. Thorne, Editor the Missouri Methodist, Fayette, Missouri, and long-time Expositor friend.

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HOW TO FACE
OUR TROUBLES

DON'T run away from your troubles. Don't magnify them. Don't dwell on them, taking them to bed with U, spoiling your digestion by feeding upon them all day, and making everybody unhappy by throwing their shadow upon them. But with a resolute, courageous, and trusting spirit, take them to God in prayer, and then go forth to meet and vanquish them, and you will find they are much less formidable than you had feared.

An old farmer plowed around a rock in one of his fields for many years. He had actually grown morbid over the matter, for he had broken a cultivator and two plows, besides losing a lot of valuable land in its vicinity. One day, he made up his mind that he would dig it out and have done with it. Lo, when he put his crowbar under it, he found it was less than a foot thick and that he could loosen it with a trifling effort and carry it away in his wagon.

He smiled to think how all through the years this rock had haunted him!

One day we shall look back on our trials and our anxious cares and find how needless many of them were, so unreal and yet so distressing, that we can say like the old lady when she was reviewing her past life: "I've had so many trials, especially those that never came."

--A. B. Simpson, in "Alliance Weekly."

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W. S. Ramsey
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Cleveland, Ohio

A POPULAR novelty song describes a man whose home is now owned by the railroad. He and his family live the front and the back, but there is no living in the middle of the house, for

By

WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN

THE RAILROAD COMES THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THE HOUSE

at's the railroad track.

The song writer in all probability had no intention of conveying the teaching, but there is a lesson of life here which we ought not miss; the trains are not always on time. The man was singing this song in the middle of the house on the assumption that the train would not come through off schedule. But it did! and the result was fatal.

Too many of us *treat sin* in the same way. *We sit on the track*, right in the path of evil, assuming in all complacency that no harm can come to us. But when we become *too frisky with sin* we may discover, to our sorrow, that the trains come by when we least expect them.

THE CASE OF SAMSON: The pages of scripture paint for us a vivid picture of a man who points up the fact. The story of Samson is a familiar one. Because he had already outwitted Delilah on previous occasions he confidently assumed that no harm could come to him. So the bible portrays Samson, in the language of the modern song, "singing his song in the middle of the house." He thought he could play with fire and not get burned.

The intention of Delilah was persistent. She determined to learn the secret of his strength, and she teased and tempted until he told. His strength lay in the vow he had made to God not to cut his hair. As long as he kept his vow his strength remained. But when his vow was broken by the cutting of his hair, his strength was gone, and the mighty Samson became as weak as other men.

Delilah had won her battle. She revealed

the secret, and Samson was defeated. He was taken prisoner by the Philistines, who put out his eyes and made him a slave. He had become too frisky with evil and it had destroyed him.

What happened to Samson is a parable of life itself. We cannot live on a fringe of evil without being swept into the vortex of its swirling waters and overcome.

Which tracks lead to destruction? Stretching the analogy of the novelty-song a bit further we might observe that there are several tracks which lead to our spiritual destruction, all of which we may discover too frequently coming through *the middle of the house*.

One of these is materialism. In Wordsworth's undying phrase, "The world is too much with us." Nor should we forget the rest of the passage:

Late and soon, getting and spending,
We lay waste our powers.

These tinsel times in which we live place too great emphasis upon possessions, when our central thought ought to be given to the things which we allow to possess us. For in the final analysis it is the things which possess us that mark our destiny.

John Ruskin tells of the wreck of a ship in California. One of the passengers fastened a belt about himself with two hundred pounds of gold in it, with which he was found afterwards at the bottom. "Now," asks Ruskin, "as he was sinking, had he the gold? or had the gold him?"

There is no greater peril before the souls of men than the spirit of materialism which prevails in our day. When we follow this track it leads to our destruction.

OR, let us be less subtle and recognize the *blunt fact* of unrighteousness

in our living. It is not too extravagant to suggest that the sins of uncleanness which the Apostle Paul was wont to describe so vividly are very much a part of life in twentieth century America. Dr. Kinsey's works, though factual, make sordid reading, because they point up the conditions which the modern age take to be normal.

These sins of uncleanness are, as a recent writer said, "one of the real cancers on the body of human society today." Like a malignant cancer, sin continues to grow larger and larger, until the day comes when it destroys the tissue on which it feeds.

There is a familiar story about a circus performer who would captivate his audience by wrestling a boa constrictor. For months he put on his thrilling act, never failing to hold his audience spellbound, but all the time remaining master of the giant reptile.

One night, however, as the performer stood in the cage, the snake did not respond to his commands. He tried to force the reptile into submission, but the huge constrictor ignored his words, and before a horrified crowd the snake wrapped itself around the body of the trainer and crushed him to death. What had happened? Only this: each day the snake was growing larger and stronger, until the day came when it destroyed the man who had wrestled with it.

So it is with sin. Allow it entrance into the corridors of your life and you soon discover that it fills all the rooms, and becomes master of the premises.

Like Samson, like the performer who wrestled the snake, or like the idiot who sat on the railroad track *that comes through the middle of the house*, we will find that sin will destroy us if we put ourselves in its path.

THE HARVEST COMES: Some years ago a noted minister told of a young man who sat in his study telling of his adventures of sin. He had thought he could get away with it. He had assumed that he could outsmart God, break the moral laws, and escape with no penalty upon himself. But in his confession to the minister he said this, "If I had only known then what I know now."

Too late this young man had learned that sin wears a false face. While some pleasures may come, and may be real, they are costly and do not last. The pleasures of a moment are soon forgotten, and the victim is left with an empty life and a soul in misery.

The Church has frequently been ac-

cused of inventing such a doctrine in order to scare sinners into the Kingdom. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not only is it undesirable to "scare" persons into the Kingdom—they must be won by love—but this is not a doctrine peculiar to Christianity. It is an eternal fact of spiritual law which God has woven into the fabric of the universe. Men in every age, and in nearly every religious camp, have recognized its truth. For example, one of the fundamental concepts of Hinduism is the law of Karma, which states that whatsoever a man reaps, that he has sowed. The law of spiritual harvest transcends the religious understanding of man. It is an eternal truth of God.

Happy, therefore, is that man who discovers that God is not mocked. We cannot violate the moral law without reaping the inevitable harvest. Samson discovered it; so did the young man who learned too late that the harvest comes whether we want it or not.

GOD'S SUFFICIENT GRACE: One more fact needs to be recognized lest we face life only in fear. There is a sustaining power which will enable us to live on a higher plane, thus reaping the generous harvest of the abundant life.

While Samson labored as a slave, he had opportunity to review the events of his life, and to see these in a new perspective. Before his vision loomed his sinful waste of ability, the abandoned opportunities, the wretchedness of his deeds. But he found a new truth, a truth which is likewise eternal, even as the law of the harvest. It was the truth of God's promise to be present in our time of greatest need—present with a grace to overcome. The great Apostle wrote it this way: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

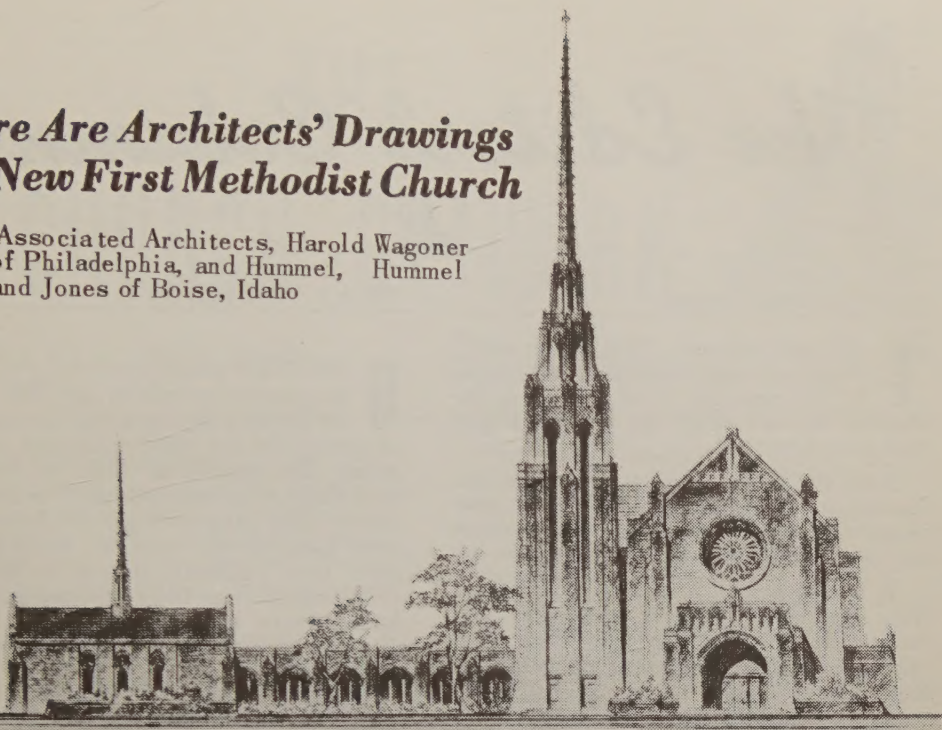
One day as Samson was at his labors the Philistines gathered for a feast. They had the prisoner brought before them to set him up as an object of ridicule. But Samson prayed for divine guidance and strength, and his prayer did not go unheard.

After he had prayed, Samson took hold of the pillars upon which the house stood, and pushed them with all his strength, and the house came crashing down. Samson was avenged.

Our God is merciful and full of compassion. Power to triumph over sin is promised to those who earnestly seek it. God's Presence is a vital Reality to all who call upon Him.

Here Are Architects' Drawings Of New First Methodist Church

Associated Architects, Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia, and Hummel, Hummel and Jones of Boise, Idaho

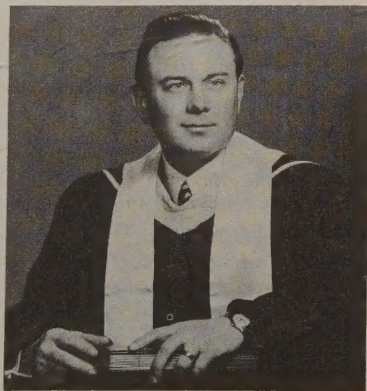


THE NEW First Methodist Church to be erected in downtown Boise, Idaho, under the leadership of the Rev. Herbert E. Richards, Pastor, is to occupy a square block near the State Capitol Building.

Associated Architects for the project are Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia, and Hummel, Hummel and Jones of Boise, Idaho, and plans call for construction of Kansas lime stone. The main portions--of the church, according to the plans, will be the sanctuary with a 144 foot-steeple; a small chapel for weddings,--and worship; a connecting cloister and religious education buildings. The buildings will inclose a 100-foot-square meditation garden in the center of the block.

The main sanctuary, genuine old gothic with roots, is to be 60 feet high, will face the east. A rose window, 16-feet in diameter, mounted above the entrance doors will be illuminated by the morning sun.

Plans include one of the finest educational facilities in the west, for the new church, which "We hope will be a structure of physical as well as spiritual beauty which will be of community



HERBERT E. RICHARDS
MINISTER

Formerly Professor at
Drew Theological Seminary

interest and pride without regard to the religious affiliation to the viewer," said Marcell Learned, chairman of the executive committee for the building project.

The Editor's Columns



BEING ONE'S AGE

THE old reproof, "Be your age!" when one said anything that seemed to the *reprover* to be stupid or infantile, always struck me as both stupid and infantile.

I am not expressing any personal resentment. Even the most superior persons don't nowadays, exhort me to be *my age*, whatever that term means.

It would not be a tactful exhortation. It would mean, "At your age, we expect you to *dodder*! Why aren't you *doddering*? Why this silly affectation of being in your prime?"

But in my younger days I was often urged to be *my age*; and I gather that you suffer from the same silly rebuke.

I don't know how old you are, but it doesn't matter to me or to anybody else; it doesn't matter even to you, yourself.

You are as old as you feel; act, and speak, as you feel at the moment; to be otherwise is *unnatural*.

Why should one not behave as an infant, if one happens to feel *infantile*?

Why should anyone be urged to *ape maturity* when one isn't feeling the dullness, the stodginess, the *owlish* solemnity, of the *average mature person*?

I, for my part, often say silly things for the *fun* of saying them.

Should a poet be required to write with the seriousness of Milton when his whole being yearns to write some jolly nonsense verses like Lewis Carroll?

My advice to you is; Be about the number of birthdays you have celebrated.

--R. S. Payneham, SA.,
Melbourne Herald, Australia

SOUVENIERS COST \$2,000,000

Visitors to Miami, Florida, are said to buy more than \$2,000,000 worth of souvenirs annually.

PRAY PATIENTLY

ONE of the prerequisites for potency in prayer is *patience*. The writer is laconically brief in his account of events in the second chapter of Exodus. The period of time covered in this chapter is approximately a hundred years. The prayers from the Israelites were many in this long and severe bondage. They faithfully prayed to God for deliverance from their oppression. God heard every earnest prayer. All their prayers were answered, for God delivered them.

Moses recorded it simply: "And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of their bondage. And God heard their *groaning*... and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."

Too often men become impatient with praying and consider an unaccountable delay a *prayer unanswered*. We are apt to judge God hastily by the inadequate criterion of man. Man will fail to fulfill his implied promise frequently because of his own selfish hidden motives. This is not the principle with the Lord. Any *procrastination of God is purposely!* It is long-suffering for your sake, or as Peter phrased it, "to us-ward." (2 Peter 3:9) The delay in deliverance of the children of Israel served to discipline them for the tribulations they were to encounter during their arduous exodus from Egyptian-slavery.

Do not despair or cease to pray when your fervent desires seem unheard by God; instead *pray patiently, to know the will of God!* No man must know his time or season. If it takes years to have your prayers answered, wait patiently on His will. --Robert T. Raines

THE CHURCH AT WORK



THREE NEW CHURCHES A WEEK NEEDED, METHODISTS ARE TOLD

A METHODIST leader says three new churches a week is the minimum construction needed by his denomination during the next decade, according to a January 16, 1957, report from Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Earl R. Brown set the goal in a report, predicting "the greatest church building program in Methodist history." He is general secretary of the National Missions Division of the Church's Board of Missions.

American Methodists, in 1956, gave a record \$23,500,000 for missionary work, another report revealed.

More than half of the amount went to overseas missions, and 38% for missionary work in the United States. The Board of Missions reported its assets "climbed to \$80,750,000, up \$2,500,000, from 1955."

-Exchange

CINCINNATI CONCERN DEMONSTRATES HOW AGED CAN BE USED

A calendar manufacturer's employment practices may be just the answer to a nagging problem now facing the nation; what to do about the growing number of *older citizens*?

While the recently created Federal Council on Aging tries to create a plan to bring new hope for security and usefulness to the nation's aging, a Cincinnati calendar manufacturer is doing just what the government has in mind—employing persons usually considered *too old* to be useful.

It reported here, Washington, D.C., Oct. 16, 1956, U.P., that the average age of salesmen for the Kemper-Thom-

as Co., is 42, and at least one of its agents is over 90. The company produces calendars, advertising special ties and business gifts.

The usual employment practice is explained simply by J. A. McCollum, executive vice president, who says that older men usually make better salesmen.

What the company wants in the sales-representatives is people "with the mental and business maturity to talk intelligently to businessmen."

The Kemper-Thomas sales force isn't all men. Some of the company's 400 agents are women—older women, of course.

One notable member of the concern's staff is Charles Sheets of Beaver Falls, Pa. Some 65 years ago, Mr. Sheets got tired of his job as railroad ticket agent and went to work for Kemper-Thomas.

Mr. Sheets, now 91 years of age, says he's going "to sell right up to the end." In business for near-75 years, the company has built up what it calls "profile of the ideal salesman." Here is what he looks like:

He usually is from 30 to 50 years old married and the father of one to three children. He owns a car, a home and at least \$2500 worth of insurance. He belongs to a service or fraternal organization. During the past 10 years he has had no more than three jobs and has earned from \$3000 to \$5000 a year. He is at least a high school graduate and "has plenty of imagination and knows how to use his head."

GETTING OUR SCHOOLS READY

Now is the time to contact the National Citizens Council For Better Schools 9 East 40th Street New York 16, New York and ask for their booklet, "Better Schools Build Better Communities," and you will be ready for the conference table.

FOOD SERVICE

Crescent Metal Products, Inc., 18901 Sy. Clair Avenue, Cleveland 19, Ohio, announces a new 4-page Composite Catalog No. 293A with typical units of complete Cres-Cor line of aluminum food service equipment, listing all standard pan and tray sizes along with actual dimensions.

Inside pages illustrate 54 typical units of complete Cres-cor line of 260 models. All sizes of cabinets with double-door, pass-thru and merchandiser cabinets are shown.

Racks, tray carts, and vertical carts are shown. Hot and cold cabinets, electrical and propane-heated, in addition food conveyers, dollies, pie cabinets, hand lift carriers, and catering items.

SERMON SONNETS

This 34-page hand booklet of "SERMON Sonnets", each with a suitable Scripture Text, by the Rev. Henry C. Spear, 128,- Church Street, Hartford, Wisconsin, the pastor of the Methodist Church, and long-time reader of The Expositor, will prove helpful and inspirational on many an occasion for any preacher, teacher, or speaker. There is no price given, but a card to the Rev. Henry C. Spear, at the above add. will bring you the price.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR WEEK

The 76th Anniversary Observance of the founding of Christian Endeavor will be the week of January 27 - February 3, and the theme is "Consider Your Call," and the plan is in cooperation with the observance of United Christian Youth Movement.

Young people up to 25 years of age may compete in the sixth Christian Endeavor Citizenship Contest; the deadline comes with the closing of this *Specil Week*; and further detailed information may be secured from:

Public Relations Dept.
Intern'l Society of Christian Endeavor
1221 East Broad Street
Columbus 16, Ohio

from whom the above information was rec'd.
on January 12.

10 STEPS TO LEADERSHIP

J. Vernon Jacobs, Standard Pub. Co.
172-p. \$2.25

Here is a new approach to preparation for "Leadership" and careful, thoughtful study of the book will assure a step in the right direction. The

10-steps are: Wish, Grow, Understand, Study, Pray, Think, Speak, Plan, Cooperate, Serve.

Understanding the great need for Leaders prompted the author to provide this detailed guide, so those who understand the need for leadership will be prepared to serve.

Two other books by the author, J. Vernon Jacobs, that leaders will find helpful, are "81 Short Speeches for 44 Occasions," \$3; and "How to Speak and Pray in Public," 95¢. Both may be had at your book store, or from the Standard Pub. Co. Direct.

TEACH WITH SUCCESS

Guy P. Leavitt, Standard Pub. Co.
8 1/4 X 10 1/4, Loose-leaf plastic binding, Illustrated, \$2.95

This book is to show "how", the "what" and "why" of teaching, and will be helpful to both new and experienced teachers. The 3-sections of the 160-p. book are: You Prepare to Teach, You Teach the Lesson, You Evaluate. This is book to keep within reach.

I will remember that my church is judged by
*my actions and I will seek to make my daily
life count for much!*

CHURCH FUND RAISING

Norman E. Nygaard, D. D.

Dr. Nygaard is a Presbyterian Minister who has contributed regularly to The Expositor for more than thirty years. For the last six years he has given full time to writing and professional fund-raising for churches

For information which will help you in considering or planning your Fund-Raising Campaign, fill in and mail the coupon below. No obligation.

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S E R M O N S



THREE WRONG Suppositions About CHRIST!

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

TEXT: Luke 2:44 "Supposing him to have been in the company..."

Mark 6:49 "They supposed it had been a ghost, and cried out..."

John 20:15 "Supposing him to be the gardener..."

THESE wrong suppositions, these mistakes as to his person, were all made by the friends of Jesus, by those who loved him; not by his enemies. Love can be mistaken as well as hatred. The chief priests and scribes and Pharisees were terribly mistaken about Jesus; but also, although in a different way, his friends. Some of *their mistakes* still persist.

1. Supposing him to have been in the company...

The last we saw of Jesus was when he was carried by Joseph and Mary down into Egypt, to escape the murderous rage of Herod the King. After that he is enveloped in the mist of silence for twelve years. We hear nothing of him during these years, save that he "grew, and waxed strong in the spirit; filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." We often wish that we could lift

that veil of silence and learn something about him during those twelve years. But the lips of the evangelist are sealed; and far better that silence than the absurd and fantastic tales of the apocryphal gospels which try to fill in the gaps in the history of his life.

Those twelve years were the formative years of the life of Jesus. They are the formative years of every one's life. By the time a child is twelve years of age the twig is bent and character is formed. And hence the sacred, solemn and all important task of their fathers and mothers. To a large degree, it may be said, when their child is twelve years of age the parents turn out a finished product. It is altogether unlikely that after twelve years any education or future experience will effect any radical change in character or disposition. Jesus, Luke tells us, was "subject to his parents, and grew in favor with God and man." He was trained in the way he should go, and when he reached maturity he did not depart from it. At even an earlier age than twelve a child will often show that his heart is inclined to the Lord. Josiah was only eight years of age when he ascended the throne of Judah; but the record is that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside to the right hand or the left."

Every year the devout mother and Joseph went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the Passover. When Jesus was twelve years old they took him up with them on one of the sacramental visits. When they had fulfilled their duty at the feast, they started homeward, back to Nazareth. In their haste of departure they did not notice that Jesus was not with them. When at length, some distance from the city, they did discover

Presbyterian
Butler, Pennsylvania

that he was not with them, they took for granted that he was somewhere in the caravan travelling to Nazareth; getting a ride perhaps on a camel or an ass, as boys liked to do. "Where is Jesus?" Mary must have said to Joseph. And Joseph probably answered, for Luke says they were in a company of their relatives and neighbors: "Oh, I suppose he is getting a ride with Uncle Samuel; or he may be with Aunt Hannah." So, "supposing him to have been in the company," they journeyed on toward Nazareth.

But after the caravan had halted, probably at the end of the first day's journey, then they became anxious, and instituted a search among their relatives and acquaintances. But none of them had seen or heard of Jesus. The next morning they started back to Jerusalem to search for him, and their hearts must have been filled with anxiety and alarm. On the third day they reached the city and found Jesus in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. If twenty and more years later they wondered at his wisdom when they heard him teach, how great must have been their astonishment as they heard this boy of twelve ask them questions!

Mary gave her son a mild rebuke: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Mary had feared that her boy was lost; stolen, kidnapped, perhaps, by Beoudins. And what did she think, when Jesus answered, "Wistye not that I must be about my fathers business?"

Parents ought to know where their children are, and not suppose or take for granted that all is well with them. In the case of Jesus, intent already upon his Father's business, all was well. But in the case of many other children, supposed by their parents to be in good company, all is not well; sometimes far from well. The terrible deluge of crime and immorality which today is engulfing our nation is due in large part to parents who either suppose that all is well with their children, or do not care whether it is well with them or not. Know where your children are. Follow them with your love and your *interceding prayers*.

What is true about your child, that you must not suppose, take for granted, that all is well with him, is true of another child--your own soul. Do not suppose that because you once confessed the Name of Christ and came into the

church, that you are in the company of Christ, unless you are faithful in what the church teaches--worship, prayer, the reading of the Bible, and in good works. Nor suppose that because you have in general good intentions, and a degree of religious aspiration, that all is well with you. No doubt Balaam, when he was thrilled with the vision of Israel's unfolded destiny, and prayed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," supposed that all would be well with him in the end. Yet he did not die the death of the righteous, but perished miserably fighting in battle against the very people whom he had so greatly blessed. Take nothing for granted in this your Christian warfare; but work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. You can keep in the company of Jesus if you so desire, and live in accordance with that desire. He himself greatly desires to have you in his company. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; If any man hear my voice and open unto me, I will come unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

II. "They supposed it had been a ghost."

After Jesus received the sorrowful tidings of the murder of John, his great forerunner, by Herod Antipas, and also because he saw that his disciples were in need of rest and a change of scene, he said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Secretly, as they thought, the disciples and Jesus embarked in one of the fishing boats and started for a remote place on the other side of the lake. But their departure had been noticed, and when Jesus and the disciples reached the place where they hoped to have rest and quiet, they found the people, who had run around the lake, waiting there for them. If it had been you or I, we probably would have been put out, and would have said to the people, "Can you not let us alone for a little? Can -- you not grant us a season of rest and quiet?" But not so Jesus. Instead of that, he was "moved with compassion, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and began to teach them many things."

When the sermon was finished, the disciples came to him and asked him to send the people away, back to their own homes, or into the villages round about, for the night was coming on, and they had brought nothing to eat with them. But instead of that, Jesus said, "Give ye

them to eat." The disciples were astonished at that, and declared that such a thing was impossible. Feed five thousand people! But one of them, Andrew, said "There is a lad here which hath five loaves and two small fishes. But what are they among so many!" Jesus told him to bring the lad to him; and with those five loaves and two small fishes he fed the multitude.

So stirred were the people by the miracle, that they began to hail Jesus as a king. But Jesus, first constraining the reluctant disciples to get into the boat and start back toward Capernaum, withdrew to a mountain top to pray. When the disciples had gone but a little distance across the sea, they were overtaken by one of those fierce storms which frequently throw the Sea of Galilee into commotion. Peter, no doubt, took command of the ship; holding the tiller, and in stentorian tones giving commands to the others. As the tempest rages over the lake, the ship tosses like a cork up and down in the great rollers, the white foam of the waves gleaming through the blackness of the night like the teeth of some monster of the sea.

From his mountain watch Jesus saw them "toiling at the oars." But he let them struggle on, hour after hour; and they must have thought that he had forsaken them. But at the fourth hour, between three and the dawning, the hardest watch of the night, he comes to them, *walking on the sea*. The disciples, looking off over the waves saw him, and supposing he was a ghost, cried out in terror. Their battle with nature, with the sea, had been bad enough; but now they were in terror because they thought a ghost, a spectre out of the unseen world, a demon was approaching them to send them to destruction. They could fight against the sea, but not against a ghost. And they cried out in terror.

Then they heard a voice, a voice they knew and loved so well; the voice of Jesus; no spectre, no ghost, but their friend and Master. And the voice said: "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid." Then they knew that all was well. "Jesus went up into the ship; and the wind ceased."

Do you and I not sometimes repeat the fear of the disciples and make the same mistaken supposition about God's providence that they did that night when they took Jesus for a ghost? God's way may at times seem strange and hard to you; but he comes near to you in that providence; not a ghost, a spectre, but as your friend. "It is I. Be not afraid."

"So through the thunder
Comes a human voice;
O heart I made,
A heart beats here."

III. "*Supposing him to be the gardener.*"

The order of events of the great drama of the resurrection seems to have been as follows. Mary Magdalene was one of several Marys at the Cross; Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary his aunt, the mother of Cleopas, and Salome, the mother of James and John, and Mary Magdalene; all of them mothers except Mary Magdalene. She was also one of the women who went to the sepulchre early in the morning when the Sabbath was past to anoint his body with sweet spices. There they found the stone already rolled away, and a Young Man, an Angel, who told them that Jesus was risen. "He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Mary then ran and told Peter and John the exciting news that the sepulchre was empty. She had not heeded what the angel had said to her and the other women, that Jesus was risen; but knew only that the grave was empty.

When Peter and John heard the news, they arose and ran to the tomb. Because he was the younger, John outran Peter and came first to the tomb, where he looked in and saw the linen clothes lying, but was afraid to go in. But when Peter came up, he went at once into the sepulchre and made a careful inspection, satisfying himself that Jesus was really risen and then, communicated his belief to John, who also "entered in and believed."

The two disciples then returned to their home in the city. But Mary, who had followed them, remained at the tomb weeping. As she wept, not only because Jesus was dead, but because his body was lost, she looked once more carefully down into the grave to see if it were really true that the grave was empty, or if she and the others had been mistaken.

As she did so, she saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. The angels said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Mary answered, "because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Then, lifting herself up, and turning about, she saw Jesus standing near, but *knew not that it was Jesus*. Jesus said to her, "Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Mary, supposing that the one who had

addressed her was the gardener, or custodian, answered, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Even if there had been no resurrection, and the body of Jesus had been carried off, still, what Mary does and says here would be a beautiful instance of devotion to the memory and to the body of Jesus. When David Livingstone died on his knees in the heart of Africa, his black disciples *carried his body a thousand miles over mountains, across great rivers and through the jungles and hostile tribes, until at Zanibar they left it in the hands of his own people, to be carried across the ocean to England*, and interred in Westminster Abbey among the great and illustrious of Britain's history. Here, too, was an instance of tender devotion to the body of her master on the part of Mary. But still the thing furthest from her mind was the *thought that Jesus had risen*; and she could not bear the thought of that loved body being in the hands of enemies or strangers. "Supposing him to be the gardener," she said, "If thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Jesus saith unto her, "Mary!" That was enough-- "Mary!" He called her by name; and she *knew it was he*. Then, after she had kissed his feet, she ran to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord. To Mary, then, belongs the double distinction: the first to *see the risen Lord Jesus*, and the first to proclaim and *preach his resurrection*.

Why did she take him to be the gardener? Was it because she saw uncertainly through the morning mists? Or because her eyes were dim with the tears of her sorrow? Or because Jesus had assumed the dress of a gardener? Some have liked to dwell on that; that Jesus appeared not as priest or rabbi, or as a rich man, but as a gardener; and from that they have drawn the pleasing fancy--- truth also---that Jesus, who is the Shepherd of our souls, is also the Gardener of our souls. But that is only a fancy, a figure.

Jesus had healed her of some terrible affliction, seven evil spirits cast out of her, the Gospels say. Her sorrow was greater than the others because she felt her loss the more; and although she is not to be identified with the "woman who was a sinner," what Jesus said of that woman who washed his feet with her tears could well be said of Mary also, "She loved much." She loved much; the greater is their devotion to Christ.

"Love only comprehendeth love, and knoweth whence it came."

This is a story *for the heart*, for the affections; but it is also a story for our faith in Christ. No forger could ever have invented this story. It has sometimes been said that those who first claimed they had seen the risen Jesus were mistaken, hallucinated. In their grief, hoping that Jesus might appear again, they were ready to believe anything, and thus were easily deceived. But the fact is quite the reverse. Even after Peter and John had visited the empty sepulchre and believed that Jesus were risen, Mary did not believe. All that with her broken heart she knew and believed was that her loved master was dead. And even after the two angels had asked her why she wept, and whom she sought, all that was in her mind was how and where she might find the body of Jesus, for she wants to *keep over it, and tenderly care for it*. And even after Jesus had spoken to her for the first time, she "supposed he was the gardener," and thought only of his dead body, "If thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." It was only when Jesus disclosed himself to her by calling her by name--Mary, that she knew and believed Jesus was risen from the dead.

When Jesus first said to Mary, --- "Woman!" she did not know him. But when he said, "Mary," then she knew who he was. I like sometimes to substitute my own name and that of Mary. Jesus said of himself, "He calleth his own sheep by name." He knows your name and calls you by that name, as he called Mary, and Peter, and John, and Paul. Take Jesus out of the abstract, out of the world of speculation and of clashing views, and listen to him as he calls you by *your own name*; and so discover him to be *your Friend and Saviour*.

"But warm, sweet, tender even yet,
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."

FIRE LOSES DROP

More than \$70,000,000 worth of property went up in smoke in this land last month, say National Board of Fire Underwriters. September's estimated fire loss of \$70,118,000 was down 6.4% from the August total of \$74,930,000 but were up 6.3% from Sept. of 1955, the board reports.

CHARACTER READING

E. B. STORR

TEXT: John 2:25 "He knew what was in man"

THE statement is made of Jesus. He understood human nature through and through. As He came into contact with men of various types He could see into them, read their secret motives, know them for just what they were.

The suggestion in the short paragraph of which these are the closing words is not a very pleasant one. It is that Jesus knew what was in men so as not to be taken in by them. He was in Jerusalem during the Feast of the Passover, and worked some of His wonderful cures there; with the result that many people believed in Him. John represents Jesus as always suspicious of those who were won to Him merely through His miracles. That was the lower faith, the higher faith was that which accepted Him for what He was, not for what He did. So, though these people of Jerusalem expressed their faith in Him, Jesus did not trust them too far. He did not take their expressions of faith at their face-value. He saw the shallowness and unreliability of their loyalty. And He did this because of His power of insight into human nature generally. "He knew what was in man."

The Gospels make very clear this capacity in Jesus to read men. He lived in the midst of a surging tide of humanity. Men and women of different races and ranks and temperaments came into touch with Him; but, however casual the contact, He always seemed to know his man. In handling people, whether it was the Roman Governor or a woman of the streets, He always, with unerring sureness of touch, put His finger on the right spot. The only possible exception

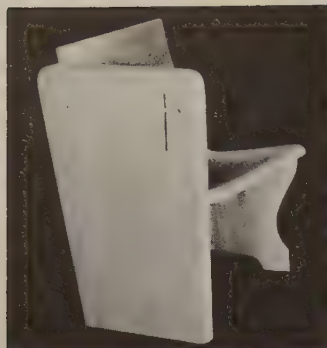
of which I can think is Judas. It has always been a problem why Jesus chose Judas to be an Apostle. Did He know the sinister possibilities that lurked in the man? Did the treachery of Judas take Him by surprise? Or was His choice of Judas made with eyes wide open, for reasons that we do not know? These are questions we cannot answer, and the problem must remain unsolved. In any case it does not affect the picture we have of Jesus as One to whom the hearts of men were laid bare, who saw through all disguises and tore off all masks until He came to the man himself.

Probably John wants us to understand Jesus had supernatural powers of insight. There is no need of such an explanation. The power to read men is a human endowment. We can all do it in a measure. Jesus had the power in a very high degree; but it was as a man that He understood His fellow-man.

1. Jesus, as Philosopher, knew what was in man.

Our words and actions are a continuous self-revelation that others may read. There is no personal movement so slight as to be without significance. Our whole personality lies behind what we say and do; yes, and in a sense behind what we fail to say and do. We are giving ourselves away all the time, and we cannot avoid doing it. It is by observing these outward signs, and seeing the significance of them, that we learn to know one another.

There are many indications in the Gospels that Jesus was a keen observer. He kept His eyes open as He moved about the world. But what is rarer He could read the meaning of little signs, could see what they revealed of character.



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One man looks up into the sky, sees the same thing, and knows what the weather will be during the next two or three days. Probably the second man could not tell exactly how or why he knows. Long experience in watching and interpreting has made him expert. So Jesus had learned to know the meaning of slight human movements. A very tiny chink would afford Him a glimpse into a man's very heart.

2. Jesus, as Poet, knew what was in man.

There are aspects of things that cannot be discovered by observation and thought. The flower in the crannied wall has a message that the scientist will never hear, however attentively he may listen. The artist sees meanings, the poet hears voices, too elusive and too subtle to be caught by the net of the thinker. And if that is true of things it is still truer of persons. The intuition of the poet is needed for the true understanding of human nature.

As a matter of fact we are all poets in a measure, and insight as well as sight helps us to get to know each other. There are subtler indications of character than movements that can be observed with the eye. Spirit speaks to spirit.

Deep calls unto deep. It is possible not simply to infer, like the thinker that a man is such and such a man because he does this; but also, by imagination and sympathy, to see the man's soul and directly to know him as such and such.

Now Jesus had unusual powers of intuition. He was a true poet. Imagination took Him into the heart of Nature, and imagination took Him into the heart of human nature. The X-rays pierce through the flesh and tissue of the body, and reveal what could not otherwise be seen. Jesus had an X-ray vision. As men and women came into His presence their soul-tissue fell away, and they stood revealed to Him as they really were.

3. Jesus, as Saint, knew what was in man.

There is a widely held view that goodness is not helpful to the reading of character; that the saint is an innocent soul easily taken in. It is the man of the world, with a large experience of human folly and sin, who is most skilled in understanding his fellows. There is, no doubt, some truth in that idea—the sort of shallow truth expressed in the saying “set a thief to catch a thief.” But it is not true in the largest sense that goodness blinds to the realities of human nature. On



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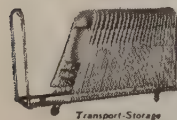


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the contrary, it gives insight. G.K. Chesterton has sought to make this clear in his Father Brown detective stories. Father Brown is a Roman Catholic priest. His work amongst men and in the confessional has given him a wise understanding of human nature; and, so far from his piety, innocent as he looks, being a handicap to him, it helps him to see more clearly into men's hearts. The problems of crime that he is called upon to handle are all human problems which eventually he solves when the detectives fail because he knows the subtleties of human motive better than they do.

Jesus said, "the pure in heart see God." And because they see God they see man also. They see human nature as God means it to be, and in that white light they see it more clearly as it is."

Jesus had the piercing vision of the sinless heart. No thinnest film of uncleanness or selfishness dimmed that vision. He knew what

was in man because He saw man in the pure light of God's ideal.

4. Jesus, as Lover, knew what was in man.

Here again there is a common idea that love is blind--that it throws a film of partiality and prejudice over the eyes, and so hides the realities of character. And again we touch a half-truth. Love has its blind-spot. But it is not the whole truth, nor the deeper truth. The eye of the soul is sympathy. Love is the golden key that unlocks the door of another's heart and discovers its secrets.--You may know something of your fellows without loving them, and become a cynic. You may know something of your fellows without loving them, and become suspicious and censorious. You may, without, love know as much of your fellows as will enable you to save yourself from being taken in and to use them to your own advantage. But without love you cannot know the finenesses of their nature and the rich depths of their divine possibility.

Jesus was the Great Lover. And His love was like a glowing torch that lit up for Him the hearts of men. It showed Him the meannesses of the Pharisees that neither they themselves nor others could see; it showed Him the nobility of a heathen mother, the rock qualities of an unreliable Peter, the gleam of gold in the moral outcasts of His age.

So, as thinker and poet, as saint and lover, Jesus looked at and into His fellows, and He knew them, knew what was in them to the very depths of their humanity.

This accurate knowledge of men meant much for the work of Jesus. He came to redeem the world from sin, and to lead men back to God. For such a work it was necessary that He should know God and the way of His will for men; but it was almost as necessary that He should know the human material that He had to handle.

His knowledge of men saved Him

from making mistakes, and being deceived. Carlyle, in his "Sartor Resartus," suggests what a difference it would make in human relations if all men were suddenly stripped of all the dignities that clothe and hide them now, and appeared simply as men. Jesus was never impressed or deceived by the dress of dignity. He saw Herod the King, and Pontius Pilate the Roman Governor, just as they were: their pomp and power were trappings that fell away from them as He looked at them.

Nor was he deceived by the subtler spiritual coverings that men threw around themselves. In spite of their own pretensions, and the general honour paid to them, Jesus saw the religious hollowness and moral shortcomings of the Scribes and Pharisees, and unmasked them before the people. When men came to Him with enthusiastic professions of loyalty He could tell how far they were sincere and show them where their loyalty failed.

"He knew what was in man," and this knowledge gave a splendid and sane realism to His work. Jesus was a great idealist. And sometimes this feature is set forth in such a way as to imply that He was a mere dreamer. It is not true: He made big demands on men, and never reduced His demands under the pressure of circumstance; but in His demands He never left the human plane. He dealt with man as He knew him to be--the son of God. How skilfully He handled every individual that crossed His path Nicodemus, the woman who was a sinner, the rich young ruler, Zaccheus, the thief on the cross: He knew each one, and led each one along the path that his individual need made imperative. It might be a difficult path; it was never an impossible one.

But His knowledge of men never caused Him to lose faith in them; nay, was it not the secret of His faith? For He knew the whole of

Ralph W.

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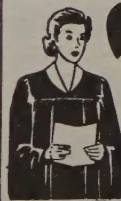
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